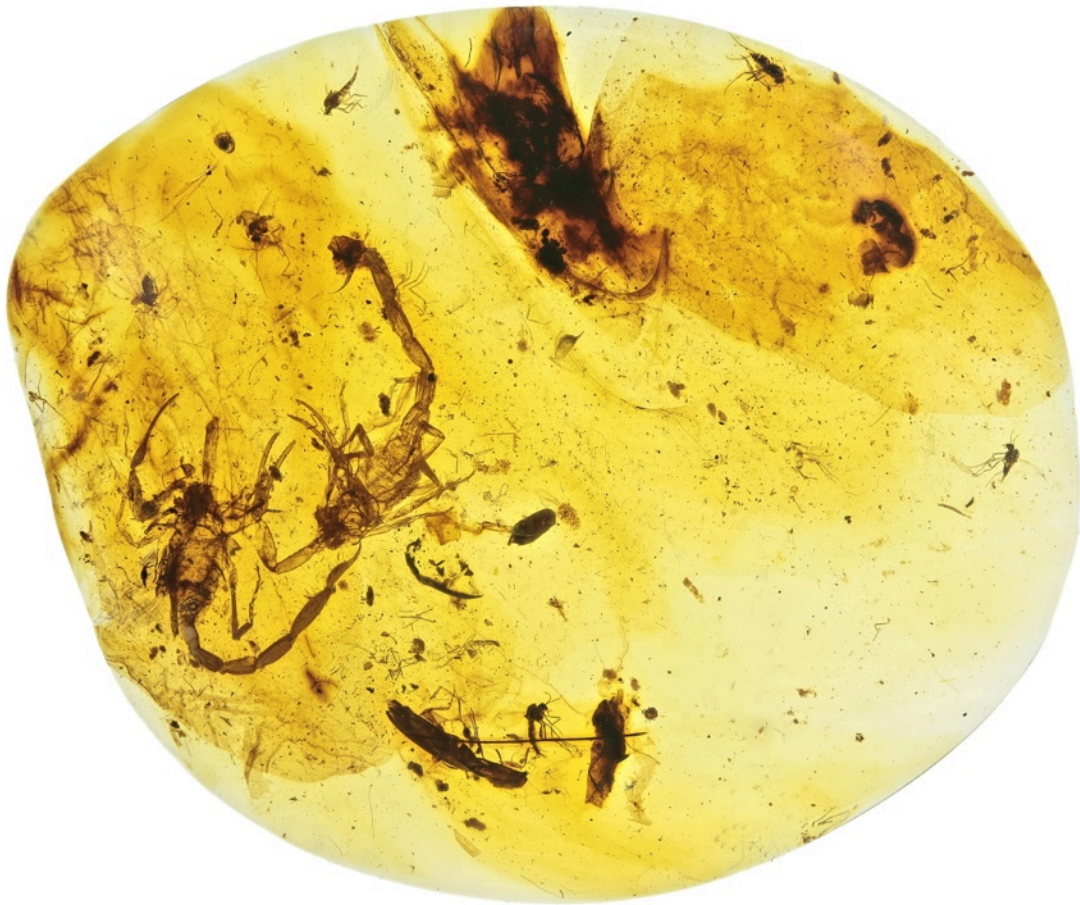


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A new case of aggregation in a Cretaceous Burmite scorpion, *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 (Scorpiones: Palaeoburmesebuthidae)

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aggregation;
number of instars;
fossil;
Burmite.

Abstract. – A new case of aggregation in a Cretaceous Burmese amber scorpion *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 is described. This case represents, at least, the third known observation of aggregation in a scorpion species trapped in Burmite. In account of their global sizes, the two specimens observed in the amber piece may be defined as instar III or even IV. Considerations are proposed on the possible development of Palaeoburmesebuthidae scorpions which may have a total of five instars, including adulthood.

Lourenço W. R. & Velten J., 2025. – A new case of aggregation in a Cretaceous Burmite scorpion, *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 (Scorpiones: Palaeoburmesebuthidae). *Faunitaxys*, 13(38): 1 – 4.

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Introduction

Even if scorpions remain globally rare among the Arthropods found trapped in amber (Lourenço, 2023), some of the studied pieces revealed a number of curiosities such as the presence of a pre-adult specimen trapped during the molting process, some rare exuviae and some equally rare cases of aggregation (Lourenço & Rossi, 2017; Lourenço & Velten, 2017, 2019, 2024). In the present note a new case of aggregation for a Cretaceous amber species, *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 is reported. This is the third documented case of aggregation observed for a scorpion species trapped in amber. The cases documented until now concerned exclusively elements of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015 and in particular of the genera *Palaeoburmesebuthus* Lourenço, 2002 and *Betaburmesebuthus* Lourenço, 2015. It is useful to recall that the elements of this family correspond to one of the most common groups found in Burmite. The other group equally common is the one represented by the family Chaerilobuthidae Lourenço & Beigel, 2011 (Lourenço, 2023). Some considerations on the post-embryonic development of elements of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae are equally discussed and the possible total number of instars necessary to reach adulthood is suggested.

Material and methods

The specimens investigated are preserved in a very clear almost rounded piece of yellow amber with approximately 25 mm in diameter. The two specimens observed are globally complete and most fundamental characters such as the position of trichobothria, the

morphologies of the telson and pectines allow the identification of the scorpions as belonging to the genus *Betaburmesebuthus* Lourenço, 2015 and most certainly to the species *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 (Fig. 1-4). Trichobothria were definitely recorded only when their bothria (areoles) could be observed. The amber piece is now deposited in the collection of Mr André Schmidt, (Zofingen, Switzerland), who supported the present study.

Results

The case reported here corresponds to the third known piece of Burmite with at least two scorpions trapped together. The first recorded concerned *Palaeoburmesebuthus ohlhoffi* Lourenço, 2015; in this case however, the five specimens observed corresponded to very poorly preserved juvenile specimens (Lourenço & Velten, 2019). Subsequently, a second case of aggregation was observed for the species *Betaburmesebuthus kobberti* Lourenço, 2015. In this precise case, three specimens corresponding to pro-juveniles (or instar I) were clearly defined and measured (Lourenço & Velten, 2024).

Most characters of the two trapped scorpion were easily observed, including trichobothrial pattern, defined as type A-Beta, the numbers of teeth in pectines, 19-19 and 20-20 which also defined the sexes as males. The total lengths of the two specimens were respectively 10.92 and 11.21 mm. Consequently, the specimens were identified as *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016. The only known specimen (holotype) of *B. fleissneri* is a male juvenile with a total length of 11.37 mm (Lourenço & Velten, 2016).

Reviewer: Eric Ythier (BYG Taxa, France) - ZooBank: <https://zoobank.org/06FD0852-A88E-49E5-B8E6-E1494B86C4E1>



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Discussion

In most studies, the definition of sexes and instars of specimens trapped in amber may be a complex task. It can be globally suggested that males and juveniles, in account of their more important vagility and smaller sizes, may have a greater probability of been trapped by the resin than larger adults or less mobile females (Polis, 1990). In the particular case of the species of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae, most of the sexualized specimens proved to be males. As for their global sizes, these ranged from 9 to 13 mm and only in two cases, those of *Betaburmesebuthus bidentatus* Lourenço, 2015 and *Betaburmesebuthus joergi* Lourenço & Rossi, 2017, these were estimated to reach 17 to 18 mm. Obviously, most of the studied specimens are juveniles and the definition of their precise instars may be yet largely random. Only in one of the previous studied cases, the specimens were clearly defined as pro-juveniles (Lourenço & Velten, 2024), providing a clear reference for further estimations of their possible growing factors which can led to some preliminary conclusions.

The theoretical morphometric growth value (constant) defined by Dyar (1890) and Przibram & Megusar (1912) for the development of arthropods is 1:26. The global size for the only known pro-juveniles was equal to 6.51 mm. Consequently, in the case of the two observed specimens, it can be supposed that the number of molts necessary to reach adult stage may be, at least three or to a maximum four. This is depending if the expected final global size for this species may be around 13-14 mm (one extra molt) or 16-17 mm (two extra molts). Similar estimations can also be suggested for other species of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae.

It may be important to recall that among micro-buthoids, females are normally slightly bigger. Moreover, final sizes could yet be more important if morphometric growth values are higher. For some extant micro-buthoids the observed growth values vary from 1:28 to 1:33 leading to total developments with lower numbers of molts. These hypothetical results may suggest that elements of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae probably had similar postembryonic developments to those observed for extant micro-buthoid scorpions (Lourenço, 2002, 2007, 2018).

The observed cases of aggregation may suggest that this behaviour was already largely present among some buthoid species which inhabited the amber Cretaceous forests; probably including also adult elements as now observed for extant species. Scorpion aggregations are certainly due to shortage of suitable overwintering sites or due to an active attraction between conspecifics, as for example to a source of food (Ziegler et al., 2015).

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Material study. – WL & JV

Author of the figures. – WL

¹ WL = Wilson R. Lourenço – JV = Jürgen Velten

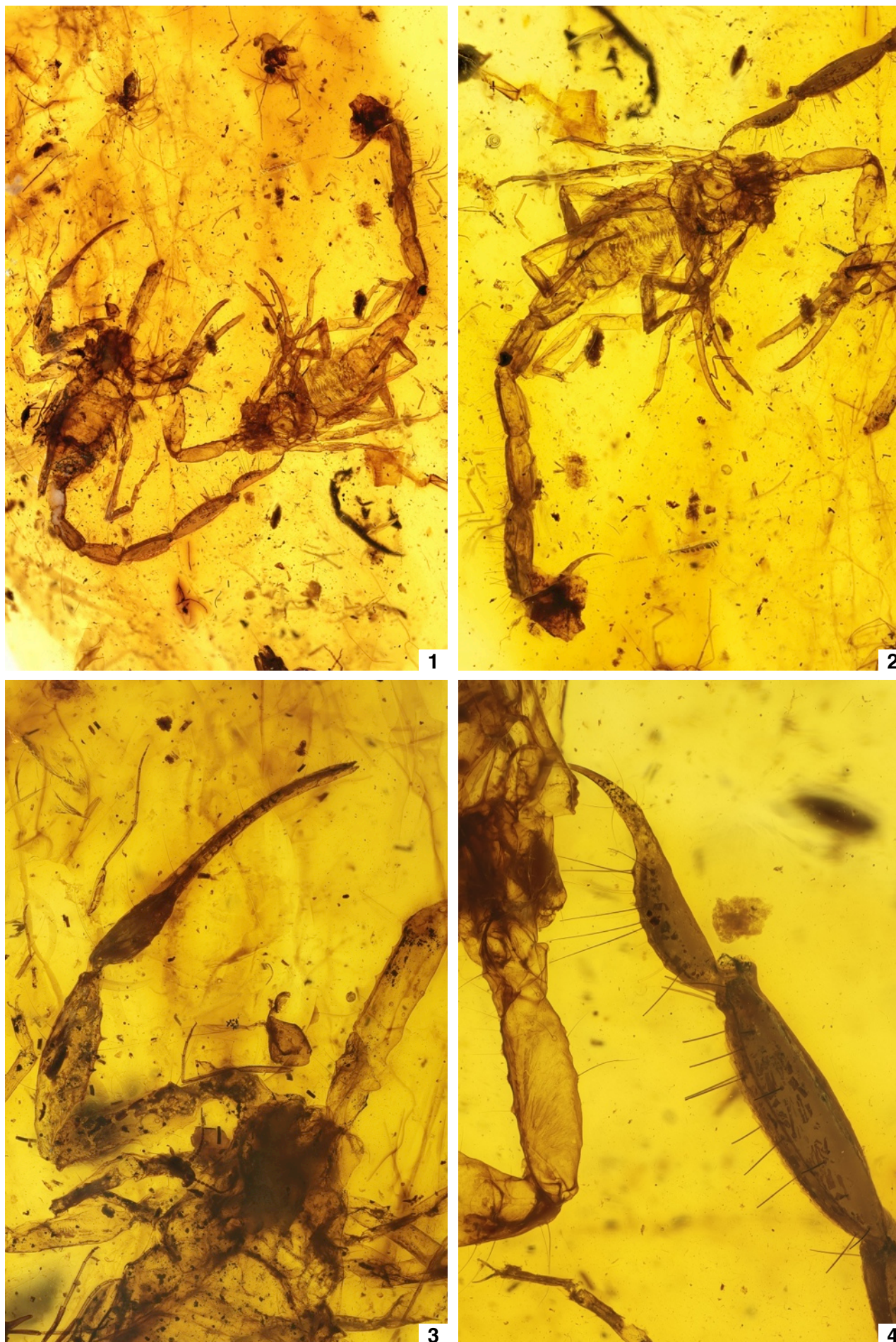


Fig. 1-4. *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016.

1. Males **A** and **B**. On the left (**A**), dorsal aspect; on the right (**B**) ventral aspect. 2. Male **B**, ventral aspect, showing pectines. 3. Male **A**, carapace and pedipalps, dorsal aspect. 4. Male **A**, metasomal segment V and telson, lateral aspect.

Résumé

Lourenço W. R. & Velten J., 2025. – Un nouveau cas d'agrégation chez un scorpion fossile de l'ambre Crétacé de Myanmar, *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 (Scorpiones: Palaeoburmesebuthidae). *Faunitaxys*, 13(38): 1 – 4.

Un nouveau cas d'agrégation chez un scorpion de l'ambre Crétacé de Myanmar, *Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri* Lourenço, 2016 est décrit. Le présent cas représente, au moins, la troisième observation d'agrégation d'une espèce de scorpion dans l'ambre Crétacé de Myanmar. En prenant en considération leurs tailles globales, les deux spécimens observés dans la pièce d'ambre peuvent être définis comme appartenant au stade III ou même IV. Des considérations sont proposées sur le possible développement des scorpions de la famille des Palaeoburmesebuthidae, lesquels pouvant présenter un total de cinq stades, incluant le stade adulte.

Mots-clés. – scorpion, *Betaburmesebuthus*, *fleissneri*, agrégation, nombre de stades, fossile, ambre Crétacé de Myanmar.

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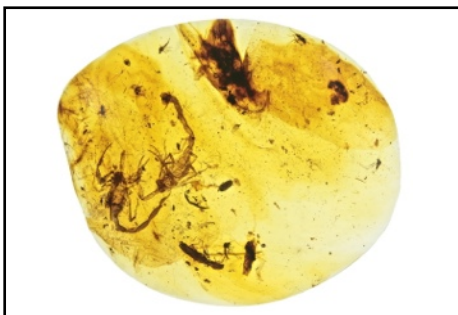


Illustration de la couverture :

Betaburmesebuthus fleissneri Lourenço; male juveniles in the stone - piece of amber.

Crédits:

Alexander Beigel : Fig. 1-4 & couverture.